

Chapter 1 - State Travel Policy

State Travel Policy

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References: [California Code of Regulations \(CCR\), Administration, Title 2 Sections 599.615 and 599.615.1](#), [State Administrative Manual \(SAM\) Section 0700](#), [California Department of Human Resources \(CalHR\) PML 2005-051](#) and [PML 2005-21](#), [California Government Code Section 19990](#), Director's Policy DP-02-R2, and Travel Information and Policy (TIP) 2011-007

OVERVIEW

State agencies shall provide reimbursement for the actual and necessary out-of-pocket expenses incurred by state officers and employees because of travel on official state business. The state agency is responsible for determining the necessity for travel and that such travel represents the best interest of the State. Each state agency may determine the time and method of travel, location and lodging. Once the necessity and method of travel, location and lodging has been determined, reimbursement shall be governed by the applicable California Code of Regulations (CCR), Administration, Title 2 sections and the appropriate Bargaining Unit Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) referenced in this guide.

All business travel that results in any cost (airfare, rental car, meals, hotel, etc.) to the state must be supported by a Travel Expense Claim (TEC) Form [FA-0302](#). All business travel that is paid for by the state via a transportation contract (e.g. car rental contract, airline contract) shall also be documented on a TEC. The TEC shall note the method of transportation but not a cost as the employee does not incur an out-of-pocket expense. Any state business travel that is paid by a non-state entity or benefactor must be documented and approved in advance by the appointing authority or designee and must be reconciled by filling a TEC.

The signature of the officer approving travel and payment is certification that the approving party has authorized the travel and that expenses were incurred to conduct official state business and the items claimed are appropriate and in keeping with CCR rules, the applicable MOU, and this guide. Approval of travel reservations in Concur and TEC reimbursement is the responsibility of the appointing authority, or designee, who has knowledge of the travel and expenses incurred by the employee.

The appointing authority must review the TEC to ensure compliance with all California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) rules and bargaining unit MOUs. **The Appointing Authority is defined as a supervisor, management within the employee's chain of command, or appropriately designated authority in a supervisor/management classification familiar with the travel may approve TECs or travel reservations in Concur.**

It is the intent of California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) that state agencies shall not have the discretion to provide reimbursement at a lower amount than contained in CCR sections unless such discretion is specifically authorized by rule. Language of CCR sections providing a specific time, distance or amount shall be rigidly interpreted. Language such as "not more than" or "up to" a specified amount shall be interpreted as a rigid ceiling with departmental discretion below such ceiling.

GENERAL TRAVEL POLICY

The State's general travel policy can be summarized as follows:

1. California Code of Regulations (CCR), Administration, Title 2 sections, the appropriate Bargaining Unit Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), and departmental policy will govern travel and travel reimbursements, unless otherwise specified.
2. Travel payments and reimbursements will be made in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service requirement of an "accountable plan" that satisfies three conditions: business connection, substantiation, and return of excess payments.
3. California Government Code 19838, when the state determines an overpayment has been made to an employee, it shall notify the employee of the overpayment and afford the employee an opportunity to respond prior to commencing recoupment actions. Thereafter, reimbursement shall be made to the state through one of the following methods mutually agreed to by the employee and the state: cash payment(s), or through payroll deduction.
4. Use travel when personal contact is the most economical way of conducting official business.
5. No per diem expenses will be allowed at any location within 50 miles of home and headquarters as determined by the normal commute distance (the most direct route).
6. Limit attendance at conferences and meetings to those directly concerned with the topic.
7. Use the most economical method of transportation. Consider the time employees will be away from the office and the direct cost of the methods that may be used.
8. Avoid back tracking and duplicate travel whenever possible.
9. State employees may use [frequent flyer miles](#) and/or points for personal use; however, use of any other vendor incentive is not allowed.

10. In general, State employees are not allowed to use state contract rates for personal business. See the [Department of General Services \(DGS\) – Statewide Travel Management Program](#) for information on rental car discounts for state employee personal use.
11. Third party vendor (Priceline.com, Hotels.com, etc.) receipt and reimbursement criteria as established by the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) will be strictly adhered to. For more information, see Chapter 3 - Third Party Vendors.
12. Receipts are required for each item of expense of \$25.00 or more, unless otherwise specified.
13. Airline Itinerary and Rental Car Agreement/Confirmation must be attached to the Travel Expense Claim.
14. Prepaid receipt is not considered an actual expense and does not meet the requirement from CalHR and State Controller's Office (SCO).
15. Director's Policies Number DP-02-R2 titled "Ethics" states that "Ethical conduct is an organizational, as well as an individual, responsibility. Decisions are made in the best interest of the organization with the overall public interest in mind." Employees should be familiar with the policy.

Key Definitions

References: [California Code of Regulations \(CCR\), Administration, Title 2 Sections 599.616 and 599.616.1](#), [Bargaining Unit Contracts](#), and [State Administrative Manual \(SAM\) Section 0710](#)

For the purposes of this guide, the following definitions will apply:

HEADQUARTERS

Headquarters shall be established by the appointing power for each state officer and employee and is defined as the place (e.g.: building, maintenance station, equipment shop) where the majority of an employee's work is performed or where the employee returns to when work assignments are completed, or the place to which he or she returns upon completion of special assignments, or as the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) may define in special situations. An employee's work headquarters is consistent with the location/county specified in the job posting by which the employee was hired unless the employee's supervisor provides a written change in the employee's work headquarters. Changes in an employee's headquarters location/county requires submittal of an Action Request Form (ARF) PM-0142 to the Division of Human Resources.

Where an office building or similar definite place constitutes the employee's headquarters, no per diem expenses shall be allowed at any location within 50 miles of said headquarters as determined by the normal commute distance.

Where the major portion of an employee's working time is spent within a specifically assigned or limited geographical area, such as an assignment area where the same routes are traveled frequently and routinely on one-day trips, no per diem expenses shall be allowed at any location within 50 miles from any point in this assigned area as determined by the normal commute distance.

However, to ensure equity in special cases, agency heads may disregard this and authorize individual claims.

In cases where adherence to the 50-mile limitation creates an unusual and unavoidable hardship to the officer or employee, exceptions may be granted. For more information, see Chapter 14 - Travel Exceptions to the 50-Mile Limit.

PRIMARY RESIDENCE

A place of primary dwelling shall be designated for each state officer and employee. A primary dwelling shall be defined as the actual dwelling place of the employee, which bears the most logical relationship to the employee's headquarters and shall be determined without regard to any other legal or

mailing address. However, if an employee is temporarily required to dwell away from his or her primary dwelling place due to official travel away from headquarters, and said primary dwelling is either inhabited by his or her dependents or is maintained by the employee at a net monthly expense in excess of \$200, such dwelling place may be continued as the employee's designated primary dwelling.

No reimbursement for per diem or other per diem expenses shall be allowed on the premises of an employee's primary dwelling.

An employee shall have only one dwelling at which travel expenses are prohibited.

When an employee maintains more than one dwelling, meeting the definition of residence set forth in this section, and the employee is required to officially travel to the location of the secondary dwelling, he or she may claim reimbursement for actual expenses incurred for meals and incidentals in accordance with the rates and timeframe for short-term travel.

For more information on meals and incidentals, see Chapter 4 - Meal and Incidental Rates and Requirements.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Travel expenses include:

Meals, lodging, and incidental expenses incurred as a result of business travel away from headquarters in order to conduct State business. The term "incidental expenses" means fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and staff on ships. It does not include taxicab fares, lodging taxes, or the cost of telegrams, faxes, or telephone calls. For more information, see Chapter 4 - Reimbursement Allowances.

Transportation expenses incurred in order to conduct State business. For more information, see Chapter 15 - Transportation Expenses.

BUSINESS EXPENSES

Business expenses consist of charges for business phone calls, faxes; emergency clothing, equipment, or supply purchases that are job related; and other charges necessary to the completion of official business while on travel status. Any emergency purchase shall be explained on the travel expense claim, and if over \$25, must be approved by the department head, deputy, or chief administrative officer.

For more information, see Chapter 12- Business Expense.

LONG-TERM ASSIGNMENT

A long-term assignment (LTA) is any assignment of 31 days or more to a given location other than headquarters. An LTA is typically for a project status job that requires the extended presence of an employee for a period in excess of 31 days but is not considered permanent due to the temporary nature of the assignment, the appointment, or scheduled completion date of the project. An employee returning home for weekends or incidental short-term travel to another location does not break the continuity of a long-term assignment.

For more information, see Chapter 5 - Long- Term Assignments.